

**SEPARATE STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MICHAEL J. COPPS**

Re: *Application of SBC Communications Inc., Michigan Bell Telephone Company, and Southwestern Bell Communications Services, Inc. for Authorization to Provide In-Region InterLATA Services in Michigan (WC Docket No. 03-138)*

Few states have achieved the level of competition that exists in Michigan today. The Michigan Public Service Commission has been both vigilant and diligent in its efforts to ensure that competitive carriers have the opportunity to compete. For its part, SBC has approached this application process in good faith and now has shown that it meets the requirements of Section 271 in Michigan. I commend both the Michigan Public Service Commission and SBC for their efforts.

Nonetheless, serious questions were raised during the course of this application concerning wholesale billing. Despite some past difficulties in this area, the record does not demonstrate that there are ongoing violations that call into question the current openness of the local market in Michigan. In addition, questions were raised concerning line splitting. I believe that line splitting will provide an important platform for future broadband competition. Based on the current record, I expect that through collaborative efforts SBC and competitive carriers will be able to iron out any future process difficulties as they arise.

I believe that moving ahead now is the right thing to do, but our approval must be combined with essential, rigorous and sustained follow-through if we are serious about serving the public interest. Without a rigorous and sustained monitoring process to follow the grant of long distance authority, we will fail our statutory charge to monitor and enforce all aspects of Section 271 compliance. With such a process, however, we can ensure that consumers in Michigan continue to reap the benefits of competition as envisioned by Congress in the 1996 Act—greater choice, lower prices and better services. The state of Michigan has moved to put a part of that process in place. Now it is up to the Commission to do our part.